

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
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R 181559Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9313  
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 13194

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT EG PINS  
SUBJECT: SALEM STEALS AN ELECTION?

SUMMARY: CENTER PARTY WINS LANDSLIDE VICTORY IN ALEX-  
ANDRIA, WITH QUESTIONABLE COUNTING. LEFTIST MP BEING  
INTERROGATED FOR ORGANIZING DEMONSTRATION. COURT UP-  
HOLDS BAN ON MAY 17 ISSUE OF AL AHALI. AL SAWI DENIES  
REFERENDUM RETREAT FROM DEMOCRACY; PARTIES WILL RETAIN  
RIGHT CARRY OUT ACTIVITIES. WAFD WILL NOT BE ABOLISHED.  
REFERENDUM CONTINUES ELICIT LITTLE PUBLIC SUPPORT BUT  
CONSIDERABLE CYNICISM. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESS MAY 18 REPORTS CENTER PARTY CANDIDATE WON  
SWEEPING LANDSLIDE IN ALEXANDRIA BY-ELECTION, RECEIVING  
19,819 VOTES COMPARED TO WAFD'S 4,463. LEFTIST CAN-  
DIDATE OBTAINED ONLY 38 RPT 38. NO FIGURES GIVEN FOR  
SEVEN INDEPENDENTS. PRESS SAYS VOTER TURNOUT WAS 70  
TO 80 PERCENT AND, DESPITE STRONG COMPETITION, ELECTION  
OCCASIONED NO VIOLENCE.

2. ABOVE FIGURES WILL BE READ WITH DEEP SUSPICION BY  
MOST EDUCATED EGYPTIANS. ATTENDANCE AT RALLIES AND  
POLITICAL ACTIVITY HAD INDICATED MUCH CLOSER RACE.  
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FURTHER, MANY ARE CERTAIN TO NOTE DISCREPANCY IN FIGURES  
PRESENTED. GUMRUK HAS 48,000 REGISTERED VOTERS. IF  
70 TO 80 PERCENT, IN FACT, CAST BALLOTS, BETWEEN 9,000  
AND 14,000 VOTES ARE UNACCOUNTED FOR. WE ASSUME DIS-  
CREPANCY WILL BE CORRECTED IN FINAL TABULATION.

3. AND PEACEFUL? SEPARATE FROM ELECTION ACCOUNT, PAPERS

NOTE ALEXANDRIA PROSECUTOR CONTINUING QUESTION INDEPENDENT LEFTIST MP HARIRY AND NINE OTHERS IN CONNECTION WITH DEMONSTRATION TUESDAY NIGHT. HARIRY, SAYS PRESS, CAUGHT "RED-HANDED CARRYING MICROPHONE" LEADING "HUGE DEMONSTRATION" IN GUMRUK DESPITE WARNING FROM SECURITY AUTHORITIES AGAINST ORGANIZING MANIFESTATIONS PRIOR TO ELECTION.

4. AL AHALI. PRESS REPORTS GOVERNMENT SEIZURE OF MAY 17 ISSUE OF AL AHALI. COURT, LATER IN DAY, UPHELD BAN. EDITION REPORTEDLY SEIZED AS RESULT EXHORTATION TO IMPEDE SUNDAY'S REFERENDUM. EMBASSY HAS OBTAINED COPY (SEPTEL). FROM FIRST GLANCE, IT CLEAR WHY GOVERNMENT WANTS KEEP THIS EDITION OFF STREET. CASE BEING PROSECUTED UNDER PROVISIONS DECREED TO PROTECT PUBLIC ORDER FOLLOWING JANUARY 1977 RIOTS (77 CAIRO 2069).

5. REFERENDUM. MININFO AL SAWI MAINTAINED IN MAY 17 PRESS CONFERENCE THAT SUNDAY'S REFERENDUM DOES NOT REPRESENT RETREAT FROM DEMOCRACY--POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE RIGHT CARRY OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THREE PRINCIPLES OF "SOCIAL PEACE, NATIONAL UNITY AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM." MINISTER SAID PEOPLES ASSEMBLY, FOLLOWING REFERENDUM, WILL DRAFT RELEVANT LAWS DEALIN WITH "CORRUPT POLITICANS" BUT NEW WAFD PARTY WILL NOT BE ABOLISHED. AS FOR HOSTILE JOURNALISTS PUBLISHING ABROAD, MINISTER CONFIDENTIAL

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SAID IT UP TO PRESS SYNDICATE TO DEAL WITH THEM. ON COMMUNISM, AL SAWI SAID LAW DEFINING "COMMUNISTS" WILL BE PASSED BUT "WE SHALL NOT JUDGE WHOEVER BELIEVES IN COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY BUT WHOEVER ENGAGES IN COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES."

6. COMMENT: ALEXANDRIA OUTCOME WILL HEIGHTEN PUBLIC CYNICISM TOWARDS REFERENDUM. VIRTUALLY ALL CONTACTS CONSIDER VOTE MEANINGLESS AND BEARING MARKS OF PM SALEM'S HEAVY HAND. EMBASSY STRUCK BY EXTENT TO WHICH REFERENDUM THUS FAR HAS FAILED GENERATE USUAL CHORUS OF ENDORSEMENTS FROM MASS AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. MATTHEWS

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## Message Attributes

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